

WASHINGTON – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) today released the following statement regarding President Bush's call for legislation that would permit additional oil and natural gas exploration in U.S. offshore reserves.

**"At a time when gasoline and energy prices are soaring, we need to develop our enormous offshore reserves of oil and natural gas. The Outer Continental Shelf is one of our richest resources, but only 3% of its 1.76 billion acres are leased for development. From our experiences with exploration in the Gulf of Mexico, we in Alabama know that drilling can be done in a way that protects the environment. The royalty payments have been an added benefit for our state. Such legislation has my full support because it would bring new oil into the pipeline at a time when our families and businesses are burdened by record-high gas costs. Opponents have to explain where the oil we need is going to come from if not from our own American resources."**